ANS Correspondence

Miami University
(Oxford, OH)

1919-1920

January 21st, 1919.

Librarian,
Miami University,
Oxford, Ohio.

Dear Sir:-

I note that Miami University has recently received the gift of the Parker Dickson collection of coins. I understand there are a number of Greek coins. May I ask that you refer this inquiry to the one in charge with the request for further information regarding the size and scope of the collection. Our Society endeavors to locate as many as possible of the numismatic collections in our country, and if we can in any way be of service we shall be very glad.

Yours very truly,

Secretary.

MIAMI UNIVERSITY
OXFORD, OHIO

DEPARTMENT OF GREEK
FRANK LOWRY CLARK

Oxford,Ohio,Feb.4,1919.

Mr.Sidney P.Noe,
Sec'y Am.Numismatic Society,
New York,

Dear sir:

In response to your request for information about the Parker Dickson Collection of Greek and Roman Coins at Miami University,I am glad to furnish the following facts:

The donor is Mr.Parker Dickson of Cincinnati,Miami ex'74, who has been a life-long collector of ancient coins.These coins were purchased chiefly in London,with some also from Vienna and Philadelphia.The Roman coins were given in the spring of 1917 and the Greek coins in the fall of 1918. With the coins Mr.Dickson gave a handsome metal case to contain them. They are now labelled and on exhibit in the library of Miami University.

The collection comprises 84 Roman and 42 Greek coins given by Mr.Dickson, with 4 Roman coins purchased by the University,making a total of 130 ancient coins.The Greek coins are all of silver;the Roman coins are some of them of silver,others of bronze. Nearly all are well-preserved and clear-cut and are fine examples of the coin-maker's art. They range in date from about 550 B.C. to 240 A.D.

Among the Greek coins the oldest are a hemi-drachma of Aegina of about 550 B.C. with tortoise shell design,and a beautifully preserved stater of Metapontum of the same date with finely modelled head of wheat.There is also a good tetra-drachma of Athens of refined archaic style,showing head of Athena on obverse, with owl and olive branch on reverse.We have also a tetra-drachma of Syracuse of the time of Gelon. ~~There~~

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There is a very fine hemi-drachma of Sicyon of about 330 B.C. representing on the front a chimaera, and on the back a dove flying; a coin of Corinth, and a very fine coin of her colony of Alyzia in Acarnania with a helmeted Athena and a beautifully modelled flying Pegasus; a coin of Rhodes bearing on the front the head of Helios full face without rays and on the back a rose with bud to right, and on left an omphalos and serpent. There are some fine coins of Macedonia of the time of Philip, of Alexander the Great and his successors. The coin of Philip of Macedon (Philip II) with its laureated head of Zeus and on the reverse nude boy on horseback carrying large palm olive branch is especially good. The coin of Lysimachus of Thrace showing the head of the deified Alexander the Great with horn of Ammon growing out of his forehead is an interesting example of Hellenistic art. Beautiful examples of Hellenistic portraiture are seen on two coins of Syria: one of them bears the sympathetically modelled head of the youthful ruler Antiochus II, the other shows with great clearness and certainty of touch the classic profile of Demetrius I (Soter). There is also an interesting series of six coins of Egypt, beginning with Ptolemy I (Soter), and closing with Ptolemy XIV and Cleopatra. The Ptolemaic eagle on the reverse is characteristic of all these coins. There is a series of four coins of Parthia --the later ones being noteworthy for the grandiloquent inscriptions which they bear; for example, on the reverse of the coin of Arsaces XV (37--2 B.C.) we read, "Arsaces, king of kings, the benefactor, the just, the illustrious, lover of the Greeks." Latest among all the coins of the collection is that of the Sassanid king Artaxerxes I of Persia (222-240 A.D.), on the reverse of which is seen an altar with the sacred fire.

The more or less rare coins of the collection are (1) coin of Larissa in Thessaly of 400-344 B.C., (2) coin of Philip III (Aridaeus) of Macedon,

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(4) coin of Demetrius IV of Syria,(5)coin of Demetrius II of Syria. There is a ~~in addition~~ remarkably good coin of Macedonia of 158-146 B.C. showing on the reverse an inscription,and a club within an oak wreath,and on the obverse a Macedonian shield, in the center of which is a head of Artemis;our example is better than the illustration in Head(Historia Nummorum,p. 209,fig.103), the quiver of Artemis being clearly visible and also the upper part of her bow.

In addition to the Greek coins there are 88 Roman coins. These form a very complete collection illustrating the coinage of the Early Roman Empire.There is usually one silver coin and two bronze coins for each emperor.The series begins with Julius Caesar and ends with Commodus. There is also one coin of the Early Republic. Included are rare quinarii of Augustus,Galba, and Hadrian. The Roman coins are most of them very well preserved. There is a fine portrait head of Tiberius in bronze,fine heads of Galba and Vitellius in silver,good heads of Vespasian and Domitian in bronze,an excellent Hadrian in silver,an Antoninus Pius in bronze,a Lucius Verus in silver, and a Commodus in bronze. There are beautiful portrait heads of Livia,the wife of Augustus, and of Sabina, the wife of Hadrian.

I hope that the above will prove to be what you want about our collection of coins. We have fairly full and accurate information about the Greek coins,but I should be glad if you could suggest some work which would be of assistance to us in cataloging the Roman coins. Can you tell us also the best way of removing the oxidization which seems to gather upon some of the coins after being exposed for a while to the light?

I am,

Very truly yours,

Frank L. Clark

February 21st, 1919.

Prof. Frank L. Clark,
Miami University,
Oxford, Ohio.

Dear Professor Clark:-

Thank you for your letter of February 4th describing the Parker Dickson Collection of Greek and Roman coins which has just come into the possession of your University. This is just the sort of an account I desired, and I must congratulate your Greek Department upon having so valuable an agency for making the Greek taste real to your students.

Our Society would be only too glad to co-operate with you in any way that may present itself. I hope when next you come to New York you will visit our Museum and permit me to show you some of our Greek pieces. Has your Library an adequate equipment for enabling your students to take advantage of this collection ?

With respect to your inquiry regarding a work which would be of assistance in cataloguing the Roman coins, I would suggest the British Museum catalogue (3 volumes) for the Consular coins, and for the Imperial period, Cohen is the only reliable authority. A set of Cohen is rather expensive but it should be in your library.

For removal of the oxidation, (a very dangerous proceeding if not done by an experience hand), we find the best treatment to be in allowing the coins to remain in a weak solution of ammonia and water for two or three hours. As a rule we discourage any attempt to clean coins.

I forwarded your letter to Mr. Newell, our President, who is at present connected with the War Department at Washington, and he has requested me to say that he would be very glad to secure casts of all the Philip and Alexander coins of Macedon, the Lysimachus of Thrace and Antiochus II of Syria. If you have not had any experience with making these casts, we shall be very glad to send you some wax and instructions. This may also open up a field

whereby we may make our coins of value to you in your further work.

Trusting that our request may not prove a burden to you, I beg to remain,

Yours very sincerely,

Secretary.

MIAMI UNIVERSITY
OXFORD, OHIO

DEPARTMENT OF GREEK
FRANK LOWRY CLARK

Oxford,Ohio, March 1,1919.

Mr.Sidney P.Noe,
New York,N.Y.

Dear Mr.Noe:

It was a pleasure to receive your appreciative and helpful letter of the 21st ult. Please accept my hearty thanks for your pains in answering my questions.We shallendeavor to follow up your suggestions as to books when we can. Apparently only one of the coins is much affected by oxidization,and perhaps it will be wiser to do nothing about it for the present at least.

I have had no experience in making casts;but I shall be glad to do the best I can if you will send me wax and directions.

I am to have a half year leave of absence next year in second semester and shall doubtless be in New York part of the time and shall be very glad indeed tp avail myself of the opportunity of visiting the museum and library of the Numismatic Society. I hope I shall come to know you personally at that time.

What I wrote about Mr.Dickson,the donor,I put in the present tense. I am sorry to have to report that since my letter to you Mr.Dickson has died.

With thanks, I am

Very truly yours,

Frank L. Clark

March 8th, 1919.

Prof. Frank L. Clark,
Miami University,
Oxford, Ohio.

Dear Professor Clark:-

Your letter of March 1st is at hand, and I am delighted to learn that you contemplate visiting our Museum when the opportunity arrives. It will give us very great pleasure to show you what Greek coins we have and to go into the question with you of further co-operation.

I am sorry to learn of Mr. Dickson's death, but I am sure that a successor to him will be found if you are able to demonstrate the value of this gift of his in your work.

I am enclosing a draft of a brief article which is to appear in a forthcoming issue of the Numismatist, and, under separate cover, I am sending you some plastoline. You can easily secure plater of Paris from a drug store, and I believe I may safely promise you not a little pleasure in experimenting until you get just the right results. For mixing the plaster a highly glazed porcelain receptacle is as well suited as anything. You will realize, of course, that after you have made the cast from one coin you can smooth off the plaster and make the mold for the next one.

Please pass on to any of your brother teachers of Greek that we welcome any opportunity to aid them because we feel that this is a distinctly worth while phase of our activity.

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary.

December 6th, 1920.

Prof. Frank Lawther Clark,
Miami University,
Oxford, Ohio.

My dear Prof. Clark:-

I am very sorry that I did not acknowledge the receipt of the package of the Greek and Roman coins sooner. It came duly and everything was in good condition as far as the outside packing was concerned. The only reason I did not write you sooner is that I was too busy to make an accurate count of the coins, and upon unpacking the first few envelopes of Roman coins I found that there was nothing in envelope No. 33 of the set in the red tin box, marked Trajan. This coin has not turned up. I do not suppose it was a very valuable piece, but I mention it so that you may look into the matter at your end. Otherwise I found upon careful counting that we have the 42 Greek and 178 Roman coins, a total of 220 coins.

I should be very pleased indeed to look these over and catalogue them accurately for you. There are, I regret to say, a few which are not genuine, but the majority seem to be very nice pieces indeed, and I shall preserve all your envelopes with the coins carefully so that in case any dealer whom we know sold you the coin which was not genuine for a good piece, that is an original, we can get after him. I expect to take the coins up now at once, and I will write you very soon in regard to them.

Very cordially yours,